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SUBJECT: TEXT OF PRESIDENT KIBAKI'S SPEECH ON SWEARING IN
GRAND COALITION GOVERNMENT

¶1. President Mwai Kibaki delivered an address on the swearing in of the new grand coalition cabinet on April 17. The message stressed reconciliation and unity. The text of the speech follows.

¶2. Begin Text.

Your Excellency Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, Your Excellency Dr. Kofi Annan, Chairperson of the Mediation Team, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's ceremony is a tribute to the people of Kenya, and to all of our leaders, who have had to make difficult and uncomfortable decisions, for the good of Kenya. I congratulate all those who are being sworn in at this ceremony, I sincerely thank my colleague President Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and His Excellency Kofi Annan for finding time to join us today on this important occasion.

I sincerely thank my brother Presidents from the East African Community who have sent their representatives to be with us today. We say Karibu. We sincerely appreciate the support we have received from the African Union, our neighbouring countries, the mediating team and other friendly countries and well wishers.

Today's swearing in marks a major milestone in the political history in this country. The recent general elections seriously divided our people along regional and ethnic lines. The formation of the Grand Coalition Government promises to heal the rifts created by politics of incitement and ethnic suspicions which threatened to tear our nation apart.

Our people are now in the process of reconciliation. We have resolved as a nation that we belong together. We have agreed as political parties that our people want peace, unity, more opportunities for employment and a higher quality of life. These cannot be realized in a nation that is divided or torn apart along tribal lines.

In forming the Grand Coalition Government, we have all recognized and accepted that individual interests must not override the greater good of our nation, nor can personal views or opinions be allowed to undermine the aspirations of the people. I therefore, want to commend the Right Honourable Raila Odinga for the initiatives we have taken

so far that have enabled us to form a Grand Coalition Cabinet. I also thank the entire political leadership, that is, the Vice-President, ministers, assistant ministers, members of parliament and councilors as well as religious and trade union leaders for fully supporting these initiatives.

I am aware that the challenges ahead are many and difficult. However, we have succeeded in laying a strong foundation. What remains is for each one of us to build on this foundation in the spirit of collective responsibility, good faith, mutual trust and confidence. Let us, therefore, cultivate a culture of continuous consultation. It is only by working as a team that we, the political leaders, will be able to inspire the public servants who work under us to achieve the extraordinary performance levels that must be attained.

This is essential if we are to meet the high expectations of the Kenyan people in terms of political, economic and social change.

As a minister and assistant minister, you will be expected to show results and excel in your portfolio. Kenyans will be monitoring your performance and will be judging you by the quality, timeliness and the services that your ministry provides. I, therefore encourage you to closely monitor and oversee the activities of your ministry in order to ensure that Wanachi (note: citizens) receive the benefits they expect and in particular, they are not frustrated by and inefficient officials.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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The first task of the expanded Government is to deal with the resettlement of displaced Kenyans now living in camps as refugees or being hosted by well wishers. It is unacceptable that a Kenyan should be prevented from accessing his or her property by another. We have a beautiful country and every Kenyan has a right to legally live, work, conduct business or own property anywhere in the country.

The Government is accelerating the resettlement program and is setting up the necessary security infrastructure to ensure that the people returning to their farms. We are also assisting displaced people to resume normal lives by providing ploughing services, seeds and fertilizers free of charge.

My appeal to all the leaders in the Grand Coalition Government is to take the message of reconciliation and peace to the grassroots. We can and must bring the cycle of violence to an end. On its part, the Government will draw up a policy for Inter-Ethnic Relations, table a bill in Parliament for the establishment of an Inter-Ethnic Relations Commission and pass laws prohibiting hate speech and crimes. We are in the process of establishing a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Committee which will go a long way in providing opportunity to national healing and reconciliation.

Further, as a Grand Coalition Government, we are now well placed to conclude the long outstanding issues of constitutional review. Kenyans want and deserve a new constitutional review. Kenyans want and deserve a new constitutional dispensation, and as a Grand Coalition, we have committed ourselves to deliver on this promise within a year. The Coalition is better placed to galvanize consensus on the few contentious issues that have been outstanding.

Another area of priority is to turn around the economy that has slowed down over the last three months. We are

currently experiencing a sharp increase in the price of food and other basic commodities. In addition, the cost of transportation has increased considerably thus increasing the burden of the majority of our urban workers. It is essential that we reverse this trend to improve the lives of Wanachi.

Above all, Kenya's economy is very much intertwined with the economies of our neighbouring countries, and therefore, any disruption or inefficiencies in our economy has a negative impact on the economies of our neighbours and vice versa. It is very important, therefore, that we work together with our brothers and sisters in the region to promote regional co-operation and development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As at the Grand Coalition Government, we must ensure that our next policies and the manner in which they are implemented over the next five years result in half of all the people who are now living in absolute poverty being freed from this state. If we achieve this goal, the Grand Coalition will have served its true purpose which is to unite all of Kenya's leaders in a joint and effective war against poverty, ignorance and disease while creating a just and democratic society.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I ask all Kenyans to pledge themselves to achieving national reconciliation and healing, and living together in tolerance and harmony. I urge all leaders, starting with those in Government to be ambassadors of peace, justice and reconciliation in every part of the country.

I urge all of us to consider today as a fresh start for our country towards lasting peace, prosperity and equitable development. Let us join hands as a nation, with everyone doing their bit, to build a new Kenya, one in which every

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man, woman and child has the opportunity, and access to live a long and fulfilled life.

Once again, I congratulate you on your appointment and wish you the best in the service of our country.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.
End text.
RANNEBERGER